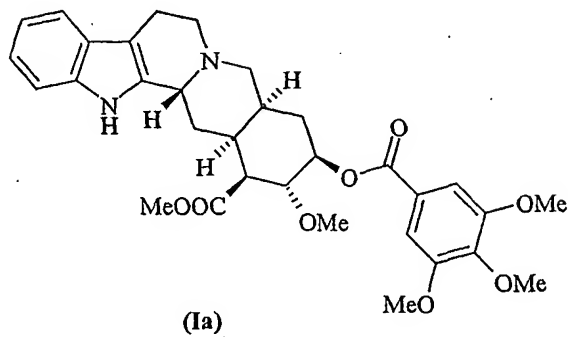


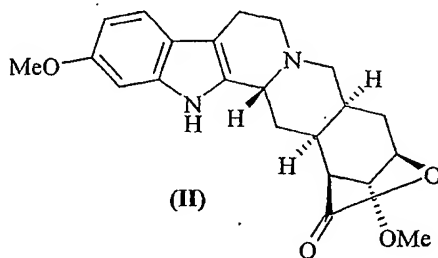
CLAIMS

1. A process for the preparation of deserpidine (Ia)

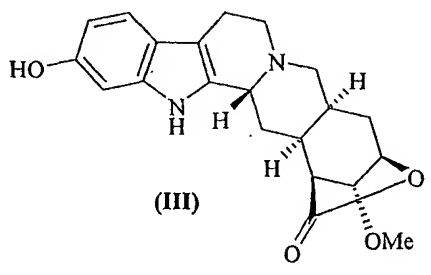


comprising the following steps:

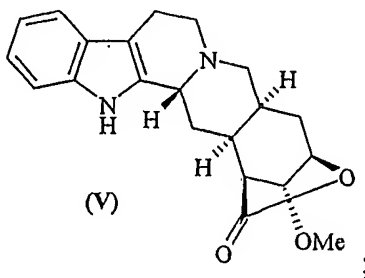
- a) demethylation of reserpic acid lactone (II)



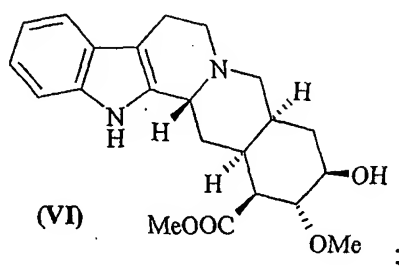
to give 11-*O*-demethyl reserpic acid lactone (III)



- b) conversion of compound (III) to deserpidic acid lactone (V)

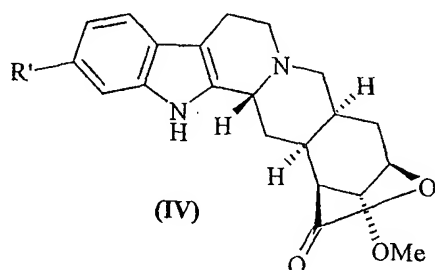


- c) hydrolysis of deserpidic acid lactone (V) to methyl deserpidate (VI)



- d) esterification of methyl deserpidate (VI) with 3,4,5-trimethoxybenzoic acid to give deserpidine (Ia).

2. The process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the conversion of compound (III) to deserpidic acid lactone (V) is carried out transforming compound (III) into a compound of formula (IV)



in which R' is a leaving group
and reducing compound (IV).

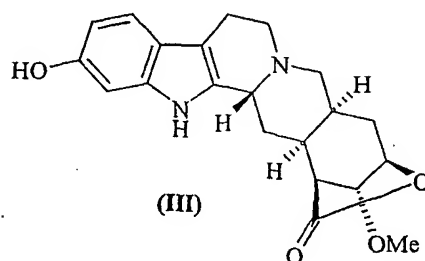
3. The process as claimed in claim 2 in which in compound (IV) the R' group is selected from a sulfonate, an isoureido or a (5-phenyl-tetrazolyl)oxy group.
4. The process as claimed in claim 3 in which the R' group is *p*-toluenesulfonate or methanesulfonate.
5. The process as claimed in claim 4 in which the R' group is *p*-toluenesulfonate.
6. The process as claimed in claim 5 in which the reduction of compound (IV) is carried out with nickel Raney.
7. The process as claimed in claim 3 in which the R' group is an isoureido

group.

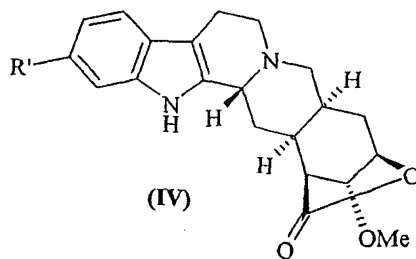
8. The process as claimed in claim 7 in which the reduction of compound (IV) is carried out with palladium on charcoal.

9. The compound of formula (III)

5



10. A compound of formula (IV)



10 in which R' is *p*-toluenesulfonate.